



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
THE GENERAL COURT
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1053

February 28, 2024

Commissioner Robert Goldstein
Department of Public Health

Secretary Kate Walsh
Executive Office of Health and Human Services

Secretary Elizabeth Chen
Executive Office of Elder Affairs

Dear Commissioner Goldstein, Secretary Walsh, and Secretary Chen,

The Edgar P. Benjamin Healthcare Center is a long-term skilled facility that has been in operation since 1927, serving diverse seniors and constituencies who've historically struggled to find long-term care options in our community. On February 14th, the administrator, Tony Francis, filed an intent to close notice and submitted a draft closure plan to the Department of Public Health with a proposed closure date of July 1st. On February 27th, residents of the facility and staff members filed a petition to request the appointment of a receiver to operation the facility, pursuant to M.G.L. 111 Sec. 72N.

In light of the notice of intent to close that was filed, we are requesting that the Department of Public Health, the Executive Office of Elder Affairs, the State's Long-Term Care Ombudsman, and the administration, take the necessary steps of appointing a receiver to the facility to prevent the displacement of residents, assess the feasibility and cost of preserving this facility, and ensure that a proper transition plan is adopted to build the facility's leadership and capacity. Additionally, we are requesting that the public hearing scheduled on March 12th be hybrid with an in-person and virtual option.

We have reason to believe that the Benjamin and its officers are not acting in good faith. Despite facing financial ruin, the Center for Health Information and Analysis, the CEO, Tony Francis, earned a base compensation of \$628,592 in the 2021 tax year. Reviewing the organization's tax filings, it's clear that Mr. Francis increased his salary by over \$200,000 annually in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic and that no governing board has served to hold him accountable.

Undeserving of our community with poor standards of care, disruption of the workforce with payroll checks bouncing, while Mr. Francis hoards a salary of more than a half of a million dollars annually, is abhorrent. There should be recourse for the residents who call this facility home and for their families who trusted this facility with loved ones' care and wellbeing.

This closure is unacceptable to our constituents, and we have minimal confidence in the ability of this administrator to successfully work with residents and families to minimize impact and ensure a smooth transition. We believe in the interim, this facility must remain open well beyond the proposed closure date of July 1st, 2024.

We hope to partner with the administration to ensure this important facility can remain open for future generations of seniors in our community.

Sincerely,



Senator Liz Miranda
Second Suffolk District



Representative Sam Montañó
15th Suffolk District



City Councilor Ben Weber
Boston City Council, District 6